

CALIFORNIA LITIGATION:

Section Chair's Editorial
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The State of the Litigation Section

By George L. Mallory, Jr.

The State Bar of California is currently engaged in a debate and deliberation regarding the continued existence of the State Bar as we have known it. As you may know, the issues surrounding the State Bar were precipitated by the Governor's veto of the annual fee bill which authorizes the collection of dues from members of the mandatory State Bar. The veto, which occurred in October of last year, was unanticipated and resulted in a substantial downsizing within the State Bar, including the layoff of over 400 State Bar employees and a predictable reduction of services.

Each of the legislative proposals to date has sought to limit the mandatory State Bar association to "core functions," including admissions, discipline, and possibly continuing legal education. These legislative proposals have mandated a voluntary bar association for other bar activities including practice area sections, the Conference of Delegates, lobbying activities and all other functions not perceived [by some] as necessary and/or politically correct within the mandatory State Bar. It is estimated, under each proposal, that mandatory State Bar dues will be reduced for each member approximately \$100 per year from 1997 assessments.

While tremendous and commendable effort has been expended by many committed members of the State Bar to explore a Voluntary Bar Association, it remains unclear whether the State Bar and/or the California State Legislature has now chosen to await a new Governor, and indeed, new legislative proposals and ideas regarding the future of our profession.

Despite this uncertainty, the Litigation Section is poised to maintain our tradition of excellence in either the Mandatory State Bar or within a mandated Voluntary State Bar.

Although the events surrounding the State Bar are truly unprecedented, the Litigation Section continues to maintain organizational structure and to ensure benefits to our membership. The section office remains at the State Bar building in San Francisco. Additionally, in spite of the State Bar reductions in staff, our section continues to employ a full-time secretary and part-time administrator as a benefit to our members. As a result of the unwavering confidence and independent financial commitment of our membership, the section remains viable and continues to be the largest section within the State Bar.

Throughout this changing environment, the Litigation Section has actively participated in numerous meetings to determine the future of the organizational structure of our profession while maintaining fiscal integrity. The section continues to analyze and comment upon proposed legislation as well as sponsor educational programs, including the 1997 State Bar Annual Meeting and the 1998 Spring and Fall Section Education Institutes. The 1998 Annual Symposium that was held at the La Quinta Resort was again a successful, well attended, and well received program. Our section was supported by a faculty of well known and accomplished litigators throughout the State. The program was informative, thought provoking and at times humorous.

Along with three issues of *California Litigation*, the section will also again publish *California Litigation Review*, which will highlight significant cases reported in 1997. Although the State Bar will no doubt change, the Litigation Section will continue to evolve while maintaining its organization, programs, and benefits for its members. We encourage your continued support and participation in the Litigation Section.

For your convenience, we continue to maintain a web page at <http://www.calbar.org/litigation.htm>.

It is anticipated that Litigation Section dues will be mailed jointly with State Bar dues invoices this year. In addition to our ongoing programs, publications and website, we are currently planning the "Week In London" program to be held in the year 2000.

Your continued financial participation will assist our section in remaining at the forefront of the changing environment in the State Bar.

Mr. Mallory, Chair of the Litigation Section, practices at Mallory & Brown-Curtis in Los Angeles.

California Litigation is pleased to review original articles submitted for publication.
(Articles should be 8-10 double-spaced pages, or about 2,000 words.)

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